

SB 63
AN ACT MANDATING EMPLOYERS PROVIDE PAID SICK LEAVE TO
EMPLOYEES.

To the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Matt Wells, and I am a school bus driver in West Hartford. I am writing in support of SB 63, An Act Mandating Employers Provide Paid Sick Leave to Employees.

I drove a bus while I had H1N1 swine flu. I didn't want to. I had to. I came to work one Monday last October after being sick all weekend. I vomited at work, and I asked my manager if I could go home. He told me that there was no way to cover my run so I would have to drive. I did, but I didn't return that afternoon. This is the beginning of a very long illness.

By Wednesday I was back to work. I don't get paid if I don't come to work, so I try not to be sick. When I am sick, I come to work anyway sometimes. By Friday I was even worse. I was having trouble breathing. It was time to go to the doctor. The doctor tested me for H1N1 swine flu. As it turned out, I had both H1N1 swine flu and the seasonal flu. I took the next three days off to recover, but I couldn't afford to be out any more than that, so I was back to work that Thursday even though I wasn't better yet.

Well, I wore myself down again. By the following week my symptoms were back in force. I took a few more days off. All told I was sick for almost three weeks, and I was never able to get the rest I needed to get better. I hope I didn't get anyone else sick, but I didn't have a choice. I have bills to pay.

As a school bus driver, I am around sick children all the time. When they get sick, I get sick. When I get sick, I'm sure I get them sick. Two things happen because I

don't have paid sick time. First, I'm not able to get the rest I need to be healthy. Second, I am on that school bus exposing the children to my germs.

Even though my employer officially tells people not to come to work sick, there is a lot of pressure on school bus drivers to be at work no matter what. When we aren't getting pressure from our boss, we're feeling pressure because we have bills to pay, so we come to work sick.

The only thing that's going to fix this problem is a law requiring paid sick time. Please support that law.

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